EXCISE (72)

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B1A9

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81 BANGKOK 51579

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ACTION RP-10
INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 AID-07 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00 EA-10
H-01 IO-15 NSC-05 NSAE-00 HA-06 L-03 PM-09
PA-01 HHS-04 SAL-01 OES-09 ACDA-12 ICAE-00 SP-02
SR-04 SPRS-02 /122 W

234672 0513552 /50

R 0509352 NOV 81
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5455
INFO DIA WASHINGTON DC//
SECDEF WASHDC
AMCONSUL CHIANG MAIPOUCH
AMCONSUL UDORNPOUCH
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DIA FOR DC-4B
EO 12065: NA
TAGS: SHUM, SREF, PARM, MOPS, PORG, LA, VM, UR
SUBJ: HMONG WOMEN DISCUSS "POISON GAS" ATTACKS
REF: BANGKOK 47839

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1. [redacted] B1A9
CONDUCTED A SECOND ROUND OF INTERVIEWS WITH HMONG WOMEN AT BAN VI NAY CAMP (REFTEL), REGARDING THEIR CLAIMED EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF "POISON GAS" ATTACKS WHILE IN LAOS. A SUMMARY [redacted] B1A9 RECENT INTERVIEWS FOLLOWS:
2. [redacted] B1A9 TOLD THE INTERVIEWER OF AN ATTACK IN THE SUMMER OF 1975 AGAINST THE VILLAGE OF PHONG NGIA IN THE SALAKHUM AREA (SALAKHAM ?) WHICH HAD A POPULATION OF ABOUT 100. SOURCE SAID A MONOWING PLANE DROPPED WHITE SMOKE WHICH WHEN IT

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REACHED THE GROUND WAS NOT VISIBLE BUT PRODUCED A STRONG SMELL LIKE ONIONS. OLDER VILLAGERS EXPERIENCED NOSE BLEEDS FOR APPROXIMATELY THREE DAYS. CHILDREN DEVELOPED SORE THROATS AND THE YOUNGER ONES, NOSE BLEEDS. THE YOUNGEST CHILDREN (1 - 3 YEARS) DIED AFTER ABOUT SEVEN DAYS (INCLUDING TWO OF SOURCE'S CHILDREN). HER ONE SURVIVING CHILD UNLIKE THE OTHER TWO HAD BEEN INSIDE THE HOUSE DURING THE ATTACK. OTHER SYMPTOMS AMONG ALLEGED VICTIMS INCLUDED STOMACH ACHES (NO VOMITING REPORTED) AND FEVER. CHICKENS, PIGS AND DOGS IN THE VILLAGE BECAME VERY AGITATED AFTER THE ATTACK AND DIED, MOST WITHIN HOURS. THE SOURCE WHO WAS 4 MONTHS PREGNANT AT THE TIME OF THE ATTACK DELIVERED A TERM HEALTHY BABY.
3. [redacted] TOLD THE INTERVIEWER OF B1A9

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AN ATTACK IN THE WINTER OF 1979 IN A FORESTED AREA NEAR TANG SIA (UNLOC). THE MONOWING PLANE DROPPED WHITE AND BLACK SMOKE DIRECTLY ON THE VILLAGE OF ABOUT 100 PEOPLE. SOURCE REPORTED NO SMELL TO THE AGENT AND DID NOT PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ANY DEATHS, NOTING ONLY THAT THE VILLAGERS ABANDONED THE SITE AND FLED TO THAILAND SHORTLY AFTER THE ATTACK.

4. [redacted] TOLD INTERVIEWER THAT A MONOWING PLANE DROPPED A "BOMB" WHICH EXPLODED IN THE AIR OVER NAM XIENG VILLAGE (XIENG KHOAUNG PROVINCE) IN 1979. A YELLOW SMOKE DESCENDED ON THE VILLAGE SETTLING ON LEAVES AND GRASS. LEAVES FELL WITHIN TWO DAYS. SOURCE SAID SHE WAS DIZZY, FOR ABOUT ONE NIGHT SUFFERED DIARRHEA, BUT WITH NO BLOOD DISCHARGE. IT ALSO MADE THE SKIN ITCH PRO- B1A9

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DUCING A CONDITION SIMILAR TO SCABIES. CHILDREN SUFFERED FROM DIZZINESS, DIARRHEA AND ALSO HEADACHES. THE SMOKE HAD NO SMELL BUT MADE WATER TASTE BITTER. THE "POISON GAS" ATTACK CAME IN CONJUNCTION WITH CONVENTIONAL BOMBING OF THE VILLAGE AREA WHICH KILLED ONE WOMAN. THE VILLAGERS FLED TO THAILAND AFTER THE ATTACK.

5. [redacted] B1A9

[redacted] ALLEGED THAT WHILE SHE WAS IN THE NORTHERN CAMPS HMONG AND YAO TOLD HER OF "POISON GAS" ATTACKS AGAINST THEIR VILLAGES IN LAOS. [redacted] SAID THAT THESE REFUGEES WERE FEARFUL AND RELUCTANT TO TALK ABOUT THE ATTACKS AND CONSEQUENTLY DID NOT REPORT THEM TO THAI OR OTHER OFFICIALS. [redacted] B1A9

B1A9, B1A4

[redacted] B1A9

6. COMMENT: POPULATIONS [redacted] ARE LARGELY FROM LUANG PRABANG AND SAYABOURY, WHICH WE HAVE REGARDED AS OUT OF THE RANGE OF LIKELY ATTACK ZONES. IN ANY CASE WE ARE STAYING IN TOUCH [redacted] AND ARE PROVIDING OUR INTERVIEWERS WITH A SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE. ANY WASHINGTON EVALUATION OR GUIDANCE WOULD BE WELCOME. DEPENDING ON ITS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO INCREASE DISTRIBUTION OF FOREGOING. B1A9

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